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Driest start for decades

7 July 2010

The UK has had one of the driest first six months of the year for 100 years.

Thirlmere reservoir

June ended with below average rainfall and updated provisional figures show that January to June had average rainfall of around 362.5 mm, making it comparable with 1953 which had 361.1 mm. 1929 had the driest first six months of a year, when 275.7mm of rain was recorded.

The drier conditions have been caused by a lack of Atlantic weather systems, which usually cross the UK bringing bands of rain, especially to western regions.

The drier conditions have led to pressure on water resources in some areas.

Barrie Clarke, Communications Director at Water UK, the water industry representative, said: “These figures paint a graphic picture of why reservoir levels in the west are so low by comparison with normal years. During such a dry spell it makes sense to use water wisely wherever you live.”

Over the weekend and into next week, further rain or showers are expected towards northern and western regions, with some significant amounts. Drier weather remains more likely over many southern and eastern parts of the UK, but with the chance of thundery showers for a time.

In-depth: Drought

Notes to Editors:

- Water UK represents UK water and wastewater service companies at national and European level. Contact: 020 7344 1809 (out of hours 07833 450544).
- The long-term average rainfall for the UK between January and June inclusive is 511.7 mm.

Contact information

Met Office Press Office: **+44 (0)1392 886655**

E-mail: Press Office

Met Office Customer Centre: **0870 900 0100**

If you’re outside the UK: **+44 1392 885680**